

REMARKS

Claims 1 - 10 and 12 - 20 are pending in the application.

I. Allowable Subject Matter

Applicants thank the Examiner for indicating Claims 2, 5, 11, 12, 17 and 18 are objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but are deemed to be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim 1 and any intervening claim.

Applicants also thank the Examiner for indicating Claim 19 would be allowable if rewritten or amended to overcome the rejection(s) under 35 USC 112, 2d paragraph.

Claims 1 and 11 have been combined. Claims 2-10 and 12-18 depend from Claim 1. The claims were amended to overcome the rejection(s) under 35 USC 112. Thus, it is submitted Claims 1-10 and 12-18 are allowable.

It is submitted amended Claim 19 overcomes the rejection(s) under 35 USC 112, 2d paragraph. Thus, it is submitted Claim 19 is allowable.

New Claim 20 presents Claim 2 in independent form. Thus, it is submitted Claim 20 is allowable.

In view of the above, it is respectfully submitted all the pending claims are allowable.

II. 35 U.S.C. §112, 1st paragraph

Claims 13 and 14 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112, 1st paragraph. The compartments are described as being in the chamber, not in the layer of the metal.

It is submitted the amendments to Claims 13 and 14 overcome this rejection.

III. 35 U.S.C. §112, 2d paragraph

Claims 1-19 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112, 2d paragraph.

Claim 1 is rejected because the formation or existence of crystals has no preceding steps.

Claim 1 is amended to recite optional crystals in the at most partially solidified molten metal being introduced. This is supported by page 1, third paragraph disclosing

crystals are formed in molten metal during partial solidification of the molten metal. Thus, if the metal is partially solidified then it contains crystals. However, if the introduced metal is completely molten and introduced at just above the crystallization temperature, as disclosed at page 6, last full paragraph then it does not yet contain crystals.

Claim 1 is also amended to recite forming crystals in the layer of metal as supported by the "crystals formed" language already in the claim.

Claims 13 and 14 are amended as indicated above.

Claim 15 is amended to improve antecedent basis.

Claim 19 was amended similar to the above-described amendments to Claim 1.

Thus, it is submitted these rejections are overcome.

IV. Conclusion

Applicants submit all the objections and rejections are overcome. Thus, a timely Notice of Allowance is therefore respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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